

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please ~~cancel~~ Claim 48 without prejudice.

Please amend Claim 45 to read as follows. A copy of Claim 45 marked up to show the changes is submitted herewith.

Sub
f1
45. (Amended) A production apparatus for producing a crystal, said apparatus comprising:
a crucible divided into a plurality of stages; and
a heater arranged to heat said crucible,
wherein said crucible has formed therein a degassing hole in a side wall portion thereof for discharging an impurity gas produced when refining a material by adding a scavenger thereto, and
wherein a lower portion of a first stage of the plurality of stages is positioned to cover an upper edge of a wall portion of a second stage of the plurality of stages, the overall height of said plurality of stages is 10mm to 50mm, the degassing hole has a diameter of 1mm to 5 mm, and the crystal is fluoride crystal.

REMARKS

Claims 45-47 and 49-53 are pending. Claim 48 has been cancelled without prejudice. Claim 45 is the only claim in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.